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ABSTRACT

This is the Senate summary on the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science Act's background and on the role of the Commission. It provides a section-by-section analysis of S. 1519 which includes: (1) citation, (2) policy, (3) establishment, (4) contributions, (5) functions, (6) membership and (7) authorization of appropriations. Other documents on this same legislation are reported in LI 002 018, LI 002 023, and LI 002 024. (MF)

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NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE ACT

MAY 22, 1969.—Ordered to be printed
(Filed under authority of the order of the Senate of May 20, 1969)

Mr. YARBOROUGH, from the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 1519]

The Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, to which was referred the bill (S. 1519) to establish a National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

The committee amendment is in the nature of a substitute.

BACKGROUND

On September 2, 1966, the President established, by Executive Order 11301, a National Advisory Commission on Libraries, which was directed—

(1) to make a comprehensive study and appraisal of the role of libraries as resources for scholarly pursuits, and centers for the dissemination of knowledge, and as components of the evolving national information systems;

(2) to appraise the policies, programs, and practices of public agencies and private institutions and organizations, together with other factors, which have a bearing on the role and effective utilization of libraries;

(3) to appraise library funding, including Federal support of libraries, to determine how funds available for the construction and support of libraries and library services can be more effectively and efficiently utilized; and

(4) to develop recommendations for action by Government or private institutions and organizations designed to ensure an effective and efficient system for the Nation.

The recommendations of the Commission were submitted as a report to the President on October 15, 1968. The report recommended the establishment of a National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. The following are excerpts from the report:

* * * * *

According to figures supplied to the Commission by the U.S. Office of Education in June 1968, it would require a lump sum expenditure in 1968 of $1.6 billion to stock school libraries optimally. Just to make up the backlog of space required to construct centralized public school libraries where they did not exist in 1961 would require $2.145 billion. Space requirements for replacement and new growth for public libraries have been estimated at $1.132 billion for the period 1962–75. As for the academic libraries, available figures compare present trend with optimum trend over the total period 1962–75: $1.945 billion compared with $9.891 billion for books and materials, $120 million compared with $360 million for new construction.

Obviously such large amounts are beyond immediate achievement, but the estimates afford some general measure of the magnitude of the financial problem that lies ahead in the development of library resources.

It already seems perfectly clear, however, that the need for additional financial support for our libraries is great at present and will grow rapidly in the future.

* * * * *

* * * The present Commission has not attempted to make its own specific estimate of the dollar needs of libraries—in part because the members have not found it possible to evaluate existing standards and do not believe an adequate factual basis for a reliable estimate exists, and in part because any estimate would quickly be made obsolete by changing needs and costs—but primarily because the principal need is to create machinery for continuing examination of changing library needs for devising means of meeting them, and for determining priorities and costs. This would be the task of the permanent National Commission on Libraries and Information Science proposed in this report.

* * * * *

* * * Finally, it should be stated here that the tasks of analyzing the needs, planning, setting standards, allocating resources, measuring performance, and coordinating efforts will be difficult and complex in the years ahead. Effective progress will require the sustained effort of the present Commission's recommended ongoing National Commission on Libraries and Information Science working with Federal agencies, the national libraries, and many other institutions, groups, and individuals.

S. 1519 implements the major provisions of this recommendation.

Summary

S. 1519, if enacted as amended by the committee, would—

(1) affirm it to be the policy of the United States that library and information services adequate to meet the needs of the people of the United States are essential to achieve national goals and to utilize most effectively the Nation's educational resources and that the Federal Government will cooperate with State and local governments and public and private agencies in assuring optimum provision of such services; and

(2) establish a National Commission on Libraries and Information Science as an independent component of the Office of the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Role of the Commission

The Commission would have the primary responsibility for developing and recommending overall plans for carrying out the national policy with respect to libraries and information science and for advising appropriate governmental agencies at all levels with respect to the means of carrying out those plans. The Commission shall—

(1) advise the President and the Congress on the implementation of the national policy;

(2) conduct studies, surveys, analyses of the library and informational needs of the Nation and the means by which those needs may be met;

(3) appraise the adequacy of library and information resources and services and evaluate the effectiveness of library and information science programs;

(4) develop and recommend overall plans for meeting national library and informational needs and for coordinating the activities of the Federal, State, and local levels;

(5) advise Federal, State, local, and private agencies with respect to library and information sciences, services and programs;

(6) promote research and development activities; and

(7) submit to the President and the Congress a report on its activities.

The Commission would be authorized to contract to carry out its functions, publish and disseminate reports, and conduct hearings.

The Commission will not take over any of the programs now being administered by the Library of Congress, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Department of Agriculture, the National Science Foundation, or any other Federal agency. The Commission is solely a planning and coordinating body. The planning which the Commission is to carry out is overall planning involving the establishment of goals and the recommendation to Federal and non-Federal public library and information science centers the means by which those goals may be obtained.

The Commission will not seek to replace the detailed planning now being undertaken by the various operating agencies. The Commission is given authority to promote research. The committee intends that the Commission within the limits of its authority and its small budget be able to conduct surveys and research on questions which merit such activities. The committee notes that the Commission does not

have grant authority; therefore, all its research activities would be conducted either by contracting under section 5(b)(1) or by in-house research and survey activities under section 6(c). The research conducted by the Commission ought not to duplicate the research now being carried out by the operating agencies. However, the committee expects all agencies conducting research in the library and information science areas to cooperate with the Commission by providing it with the information the Commission needs to carry out its mission.

Although the Commission has been placed within the Office of the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, the committee wishes to stress the fact that the Commission has independent status and that the Secretary does not have authority to direct the activities of the Commission or to edit any of the reports or materials published by the Commission. The committee understands that the National Advisory Commission set up under the Executive order was delayed by the fact that each agency had to clear those aspects of its report which dealt with that agency. The committee wishes to make clear that the National Commission established in this bill is not responsible to any department or agency with respect to the content of its reports. Of course, any department may comment on the activities of the Commission but no department has the authority to change or withhold reports the Commission wishes to make to the President and to the Congress.

Section-By-Section Analysis of S. 1519

CITATION

Section 1 provides that the act may be cited as the "National Commission on Libraries and Information Science Act."

POLICY

Section 2 states that the Congress affirms that library and information services adequate to meet the needs of the people of the United States are essential to achieve national goals and to utilize most effectively the Nation's educational resources and that the Federal Government will cooperate with State and local governments and public and private agencies in assuring optimum provision of such services.

ESTABLISHMENT

Section 3(a) establishes a National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (hereinafter referred to as the "Commission") as an independent component of the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Subsection (b) of section 3 provides that the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare shall provide the Commission with necessary administrative services.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Section 4 authorizes the Commission to accept, in the name of the United States, grants, gifts, or bequests of money for immediate disbursement in furtherance of the functions of the Commission.

Such grants, gifts, or bequests, after acceptance by the Commission, shall be paid by the donor or his representative to the Treasurer of the United States, whose receipts shall be their acquittance. The Treasurer of the United States shall enter them in a special account to the credit of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science for the purposes in each case specified.

FUNCTIONS

Section 5 sets forth the functions of the Commission.

Subsection (a), which contains the mandatory functions of the Commission, provides that the Commission shall have the primary responsibility for developing or recommending overall plans for, and advising the appropriate governments and agencies on, the policy set forth in section 2 of the act. In carrying out that responsibility, the Commission shall—

(1) advise the President and the Congress on the implementation of national policy by such statements, presentations, and reports as it deems appropriate;

(2) conduct studies, surveys, and analyses of the library and informational needs of the Nation, including the special library and informational needs of rural areas and of economically, socially, or culturally deprived persons, and the means by which these needs may be met through information centers, through the libraries of elementary and secondary schools, and institutions of higher education, and through public, research, special, and other types of libraries;

(3) appraise the adequacy of library and information resources and services and evaluate the effectiveness of library and information science programs;

(4) develop or recommend overall plans for meeting national library and informational needs and for the coordination of activities at the Federal, State, and local levels taking into consideration all of the library and information resources of the Nation to meet those needs;

(5) extend advice with respect to library and information programs, services, and sciences to Federal, State, local and private agencies and organizations;

(6) promote research and development activities which will extend and improve the Nation's library and information-handling capability as essential links in the national communications networks; and

(7) submit through the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to the President and the Congress (not later than January 31 of each year) a report on its activities during the preceding fiscal year.

Subsections (b) and (c) provide for additional discretionary authority for the Commission.

Subsection (b) authorizes the Commission to—

(1) contract with Federal agencies and other public and private agencies to carry out any of its functions under subsection (a) of section 5; and

(2) publish and disseminate such reports, findings, studies, and records as it deems appropriate.

Subsection (c) provides that the Commission is further authorized to conduct such hearings at such times and places as it deems appropriate for carrying out the purposes of the act.

Subsection (d) directs all Federal agencies to cooperate with the Commission in carrying out the purposes of the act, to the extent they are not prohibited by law.

MEMBERSHIP

Section 6 sets forth the membership of the Commission, authorizes payment for the services of members, and authorizes procurement of the services of personnel.

Subsection (a) provides that the Commission shall be composed of the Librarian of Congress and 14 members appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. Not less than five members of the Commission shall be professional librarians or information specialists, and the remainder shall be persons having special competence or interest in the needs of our society for library and information services, at least one of whom shall be knowledgeable with respect to the technological aspects of library and information services and sciences. One of the members of the Commission shall be designated by the President as Chairman of the Commission. The terms of office of members of the Commission shall be 5 years, except that (1) the terms of office of the members first appointed shall commence on the date of enactment of the act and shall expire three at the end of 1 year; three at the end of 2 years, three at the end of 3 years, three at the end of 4 years, and three at the end of 5 years, as designated by the President at the time of appointment, and (2) a member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which his predecessor was appointed shall be appointed only for the remainder of such term.

Subsection (b) provides that members of the Commission who are not in the regular full-time employ of the United States shall, while attending meetings or conferences of the Commission or otherwise engaged in the business of the Commission, be entitled to receive compensation at a rate fixed by the Secretary, but not exceeding the rate specified at the time of such service for grade GS–18 in section 5332 of title 5, United States Code, including traveltime, and while so serving on the business of the Commission away from their homes or regular places of business, they may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, and authorized by section 5703 of title 5, United States Code, for persons employed intermittently in the Government service.

Paragraph (1) of subsection (c) authorizes the Commission to appoint, without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, covering appointments in the competitive service, such professional and technical personnel as may be necessary to enable it to carry out its function under the act.

Paragraph (2) of subsection (c) authorizes the Commission to procure, without regard to the civil service or classification laws, temporary and intermittent services of such personnel as are necessary to the extent authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, but at rates not to exceed the rate specified at the time of such service for grade GS–18 in section 5332 of title 5, United States Code, including

traveltime, and while so serving on the business of the Commission away from their homes or regular places of business they may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by section 5703 of title 5, United States Code, for persons employed intermittently in the Government service.

AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

Section 7 authorizes to be appropriated $500,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1970, $750,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1971, and for each succeeding fiscal year for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of the act.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

Since S. 1519 makes no changes in existing law it is unnecessary for this report to include material in compliance with subsection 4 of rule XXIX of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

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